

News Release



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Sussex County 911 callboard recognized as a center of excellence

GEORGETOWN, Del. – Callers to Sussex County’s 911 emergency operations center, take comfort: when you dial for help, award-winning care will be there on the other end of the telephone line ready to serve you.

The county’s 911 center recently won re-accreditation status from the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch, a non-profit group that sets standards for and evaluates compliance with accepted medical, fire and police dispatching practices.

The center had to complete a battery of tests and evaluations to win the award, as well as submit an application with necessary documentation that filled three, 3.5-inch-thick binders, said Debbie Jones, quality assurance supervisor for the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center.

NAED evaluates centers on its so-called “20 Points of Excellence,” which examines everything from the types of questions dispatchers ask callers – not to mention how and in what order they are posed from a professionally prepared script – to how continuing education is provided. The evaluation even looks at how the 911 center is physically set up and staffed.

Officials at the operations center near Georgetown are excited about the award.

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-- Continued from Page 1 --

“This re-accreditation means the residents and visitors of Sussex County are getting quality service,” Jones said. “And that quality service means they’re going to get the equipment and help they need as quickly as possible.”

“This should give everyone, as a whole, confidence in the system,” Jones said.

Added Sussex County EOC Director Joseph Thomas: “We continue to maintain the national standards for emergency medical dispatching.”

The Sussex County EOC first won accreditation through NAED in 2001, becoming only the 65th such center in the world to win the distinction under the group’s evaluation system. The re-certification awarded this summer is valid through 2008.

“This accomplishment demonstrates to not only each individual within the communications center, but also to the administration, community and the world, that Sussex County EOC is compliant with all international practice standards for emergency medical dispatch,” according to the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch, based in Salt Lake City.

The Sussex County 911 center took more than 84,300 calls in 2004, with more than 22,100 of those for fire and EMS emergencies. On average, dispatchers can process a call and alert the necessary rescue personnel within 45 to 75 seconds.

Sussex County will be officially recognized next year at an annual conference in Florida.

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